

HB 173 Opposition Testimony Given By Steve Kamps – Public Hearing 1/18/2011

My name is Steve Kamps and I am a native Montanan who has been bowhunting ever since I turned twelve. I've come here today because I'm very concerned about the future of bowhunting in Montana not only for myself but for my 9 year old son who came along with me today. The creep of technology into our sport is a huge threat to the viability of our archery seasons.

If we start allowing electronic devices, I have to ask you what's next? There are other electronic devices that are currently available which claim to make a bowhunter more effective. How about a laser rangefinder mounted right on your sight, or laser sights, or lighted sights for those low light conditions. How about radio-tracking devices installed on arrows that can lead you right to the animal? That would certainly help with game retrieval, right? Maybe we could put GPS receivers in our nocks next. What about things that haven't even been thought of yet? The possibilities are endless. Indeed what's next? Once we cross the no electronics barrier we open Pandora's Box like one of the previous speakers pointed out.

Beyond that obvious and very compelling reason, I have one take home message for you. I'm hearing folks have the notion that lighted nocks will help you recover game. While I'm sure all of you can see right through that argument, I'll explain why that is not true just in case.

As soon as a hunter hits an animal and draws blood, they have a moral and ethical responsibility to do everything in their power to track and retrieve that animal. Potentially knowing where you hit better isn't going to improve the blood trail, and it certainly isn't going to improve the hit? There is no way a hunter should ethically try any less to retrieve a dead animal because they might theoretically know where they hit better. What is widely accepted as the standard is if you aren't sure of your hit, you wait and give that animal plenty of time to expire for the worst case scenario – as if it were a poor hit. So logically, if you're ethically obligated to do everything you can to retrieve the animal regardless of where you hit, and the nock doesn't make you hit any better, and now with a lighted nock you magically know where you hit the animal better – how is it going to help you retrieve the animal? It won't. Indeed, how will it make the hit better and how will it make the blood trail better? It simply won't.

The only thing it will do is potentially convince the hunter they can begin blood trailing a little sooner than if they are somewhat unsure of the hit. And that would only be a mere convenience, not aid in the ultimate retrieval of the animal. I can assure you, and I speak from experience, you can never be absolutely sure of your hit regardless of what fancy things your nock can do.

You need to know, there are alternatives to lighted nocks that are completely legal and don't compromise the current laws. If you want to see your arrow better, you can buy the brightest colored fletchings, nocks, and shafts on the market. Manufacturers also sell bright colored tapes and paints to make them "glow" even more. To see your arrow in the dark, you can put reflective tape on them that is made specifically for use on your arrow. All of these products are completely legal and will serve most of the functions provided by a lighted nock.

So these doodads are only a matter of convenience more than anything. Please don't be fooled. Please vote against HB 173, which would provide a mere convenience.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.